

Blue-Green Algae Bloom Blamed For Cattle Deaths

Uintah County
Health Advisory Issued

Tests conducted at the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Logan confirmed that 18 cattle in Uintah County died after drinking water containing high concentrations of a blue-green algae known as *Microcystis aeruginosa*.

The three adult cows and 15 calves died from complications from liver failure after ingesting water from Matt Warner Reservoir located near Vernal. The algae produces a toxin known as microcystin toxin that impairs liver function. Owners of livestock and other animals in the area are cautioned to restrict their animals from drinking water from the reservoir. The cattle were located near the southeast arm of the reservoir in the Diamond Mountain area, which has experienced an algae bloom in recent weeks.

“We believe this is an isolated situation, but we are advising livestock and pet owners to be cautious and monitor the lakes or reservoirs they use to water their animals,” said Dr. Michael R. Marshall, State Veterinarian.

Health Advisory Issued

The discovery of the algae has prompted the Tricounty Health Department in Vernal to issue a health advisory asking people to avoid swimming in, or drinking water from, Matt Warner Reservoir.

The Matt Warner Reservoir is not a source of human drinking water and health officials

advise people to not drink water containing blue-green algae. Some strains of *Microcystis* produce toxins that have been reported to result in skin irritation and gastrointestinal discomfort in humans that come in contact with toxic algae blooms.

Water containing blooms of the blue-green algae may show the appearance of blue-green paint floating or billowing near the surface. Changes in weather or in other conditions in a waterbody influence the growth of blue-green algae. Generally, cooler weather, rainfall, and reduced sunshine will lead to reductions in algal growth and toxin levels.

More information about *Microcystis aeruginosa* can be found at:

<http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/esc/docs/mafact.cfm...or>

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/hab/microcystis.html>.



Matt Warner Reservoir located near Vernal

UTAH AG NEWS

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UTAH'S OWN FOOD SHOW BRINGS TOGETHER AG. FOOD BUYERS AND SELLERS

The Utah Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the Utah's Own Food Strategy Team hosted the 2nd Annual Utah's Own Conference at Thanksgiving Point in Lehi, Utah. The Utah's Own Food Strategy Team is a group of industry leaders who have donated their time and expertise to design, create and implement a state-wide marketing program that encourages consumers, wholesales and retailers to think locally and support Utah's food industries.

The event showcased the products of more than 50 Utah food producers and provided them with a forum to meet with local buyers representing grocery store chains, caterers, food purveyors, restaurants, and gift shops.

Featured speakers discussed recent trends in the retail industry, retail advertising techniques, organic food production, community supported agriculture and the role of farmer's markets in the local economy. A buffet-style lunch featuring food items produced solely in Utah was offered to participants.

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food Commissioner, Cary G. Peterson, presided over the event and gubernatorial candidates were invited as well.

For more information about Utah's Own contact Richard Sparks with the marketing division of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food at (801)-538- 4913.



USDA Secretary Veneman Signs Drought Disaster Designation For Utah

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary, Ann M. Veneman, signed a Secretarial Disaster Designation making all 29 Utah counties eligible for drought relief. The designation comes after extreme drought conditions in Utah prompted Utah Governor Olene S. Walker to request federal disaster assistance for thousands of farmers and ranchers hit hard by prolonged dry conditions and insect infestations.

"The designation will help many operators remain in business, and that is good news for their families and our state," said Governor Walker.

Secretary Veneman designated 20 counties eligible for the designation based on the level of damage caused by drought, insects, damaging wind, and heat. Nine other counties also qualify for aid because they border those 20 counties.

"The damaging drought is not limited to just 20 of our counties," said Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson. "Low or non-existent reservoir levels can be seen throughout the state, and I am happy to see all Utah farmers and ranchers will be eligible for some form of relief," he added.

That relief may be coming to Utah, and other drought-plagued states, thanks to the passage by the U.S. Senate of \$2.9 billion in farm and ranch disaster funding.

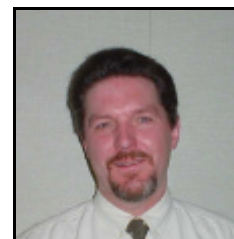
The funding is included in a \$36 billion homeland security bill passed by the U.S. Senate on Tuesday night. The bill now goes to a conference committee, where members of the House and Senate will work out the differences between their two versions of the bill. The House has already passed its version of the homeland security bill without the disaster aid for agriculture, which covers drought, frost, floods and all natural disasters.

The 20 counties designated as primary disaster counties are: Box Elder, Cache, Carbon, Emery, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Juab, Kane, Millard, Piute, Rich, Salt Lake, San Juan, Sanpete, Sevier, Summit, Tooele, Washington, and Wayne. Also qualifying for assistance, are: Beaver, Daggett, Davis, Duchesne, Morgan, Uintah, Utah, Wasatch, and Weber.



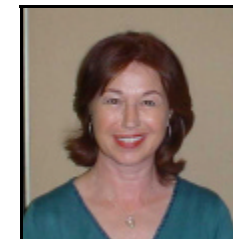
Annual Report on CD ROM

The 2004 UDAF Annual Report and Ag. Statistics publication will soon be ready for distribution. If you would like a copy contact Larry Lewis in the Public Information Office at (801) 538-7104 or larrylewis@utah.gov.



Warren Hess is Animal Industry's new **Field Veterinarian**. He was previously employed as an associate veterinarian at Lakeview Animal Hospital.

Carole Olsen Gardner is Plant Industry's new **Office Technician**. She was previously employed as a flight attendant for Skywest Airlines.



Larry Bernaski is Marketing and Conservation's new **Marketing Facilitator**. Larry was previously employed by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce as a division director.